

Carlyle House
121 N. Fairfax St.
Alexandria, Va.

HABS No. Va. 101

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7-ALEX
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Reduced Copies of Measured Drawings

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of Washington D.C.

Historic American Buildings Survey
Delos H. Smith, District Officer
1707 Eye St. N.W., Washington, D.C.

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13CARLYLE HOUSE
Alexandria VirginiaOwner: Wagar EstateDate: 1752Builder: John CarlylePresent Condition: Fair

Description: Stone, plastered, two stories above a high basement, roof hipped. The facade has a pavillion, the corners of which, as well as of the main block are treated with rusticated quoins. The water table is heavily moulded in stone and plastered, as is the bed mould of the main cornice. The pavillion has a broad doorway on the first floor with two windows above creating a wall pier in the center. There are two windows in each floor, on either side of the pavillion, in the facade. All the windows are trimmed with a raised band and moulded sill. The sash is not original, the muntins being narrow and the glass size large. The old sash may have been four lights wide and six high, and according to the period, would have had broad muntins. The doorway is the result of an alteration of c. 1840 but the keystone, carved with the date 1752 and Carlyle's initials in the elliptical arch is original. Another keystone survives carved with the Carlyle arms. The original design of the door is unknown but may have included an arched center opening with flanking sidelights.

The roof is now a straight hip but the fact that the side cornices fall below the front cornice make it seem the eaves line has been changed, and the chimney offsets showing above the roof make it probable that the whole roof was rebuilt, perhaps at the time the doorway was changed. It would seem that the house may originally have been covered by a hip-on-hip roof as at Menokin, in Warsaw, Richmond County, Virginia. When the roof was changed, the pediment of the pavillion was probably removed.

The side and rear elevations of the Carlyle house are less architectural than the facade, and the rear elevation especially may be the result of an alteration, and originally there may have been a pavillion, as on the facade.

In plan the building possesses a center hall with two rooms on either side. Those at the left are equal but the rear left hand room is wider than the front room, and is the principal apartment of the house. The second floor has four equal rooms, separated by the

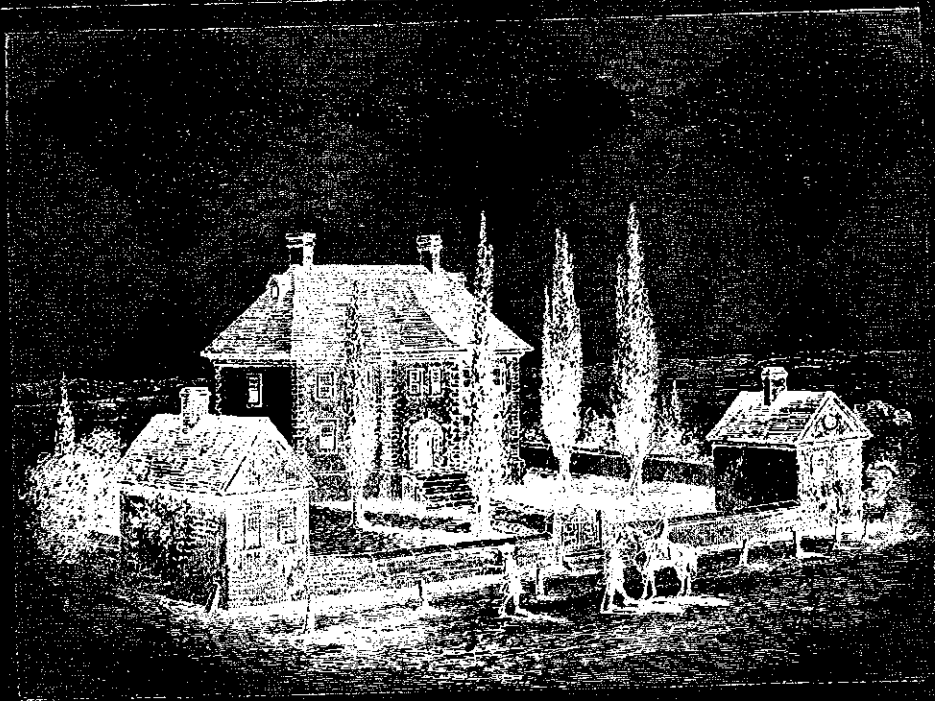
wide cross hall and a narrow longitudinal hall. At the intersection of the two halls the corners of the partitions are rounded off.

The 19th century alterations affected the trim of all the rooms except the two left hand rooms on the first floor, in which it is almost entirely original. The paneled spandrel of the stair is also 18th century work but the balustrade dates from the alterations. The location of the stair may have been changed, and the basement framing indicates it. The drawing room is fully paneled with decorative chimney breast. The doors are crowned by pediments, which, however, may not be original. The trim of the front rooms is comparatively simple but is all original.

When built the Carlyle house occupied most of a city block, but about 1800 a bank building was constructed at the northwest corner of the block and in the Victorian period a large apartment house was built between the house and the street. In order to gain light in the basement rooms of the apartment a large area was dug around Carlyle house, leaving it standing on a curious raised terrace. At the time the apartment was built the dependencies which the house is said to have possessed may have been destroyed. An old print in Harper's Magazine shows the dependencies but it is not sure whether the drawing was made at the building or whether it is conjectural. An elderly Alexandria woman remembers one of the dependencies standing about 1880. From the Harpers print it would seem that there were ~~curved~~ connections and pedimental advance buildings.

4/29/41

Thomas T. Waterman



BRADDOCK'S HEAD-QUARTERS.

busy: clerks and commissaries hurried: teamsters shouted: soldiers rejoiced in unlimited tobacco, and got drunk on superabundant West Indian rum, under pretense that the water of the town made them sick: Horatio Gates came to tender two New York companies; Richard Henry Lee led a county troop; Hugh Mercer, one of Royal Charlie's surgeons, with Fredericksburg volunteers; Andrew Lewis, from the wilderness, with a retinue of Indians and half-breeds; Benjamin Franklin, deputy postmaster, to give mail facilities to the army; Daniel Morgan, with his wagon, from Ocoquan, eager to turn a penny as teamster; Gage, one of Braddock's lieutenant-colonels; and the fierce hussar Sir John Sinclair, who had frightened West Pennsylvania with his threats, and made a plan to blow up the falls of the Potomac that Braddock might have water transportation to the mountains—all these and many more were there.

Scarcely notable were these, for royal Governors came in state to hold conference with Braddock. These were Shirley, of Massachusetts, Delancey, of New York, Morris, of Pennsylvania, Dinwiddie,

of Virginia, and Sharpe, of Maryland.

On the 14th of April, 1755, the CONGRESS OF ALEXANDRIA opened in the stone mansion. At the court-house and market opposite, the colonists were making ready to shed their blood for the crown. Behind it the Potomac sparkled in the sun, and from the windows of their council-room the Governors could see, far over the shining waters, the hill-top now crowned by the Capitol. Commodore Keppel assisted at the Congress. Mr. Shirley was its Secretary. The Congress arranged with Braddock the plan of the campaign. It did more. In secret session, "in confidence not to be divulged," it resolved that, "having found it impracticable to obtain in their respective governments the proportion expected by his Majesty toward defraying the expenses of his service in North America, they were unanimously of the opinion that it should be proposed to his Majesty's ministers to find out some method to *compel* them to do it."

This was the resolution of strangers in Alexandria in 1755; but when the policy became public, the Alexandrians met at the court-house, which faced the stone